

The Effect of the Spelling Bees Game to Elevate Students' Vocabulary

Muhammad Rifqi Mahfuzh¹; Iis Sujarwati²; Ari Andre Rianyansa³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Bengkulu, Bengkulu, Indonesia

*Email: Rifqimahfuzh14@gmail.com

Abstract : *Vocabulary mastery is an essential aspect of improving students' English proficiency, especially for beginner learners who frequently experience challenges in remembering and applying new vocabulary appropriately. Consequently, teachers need to implement creative and interactive learning methods that can enhance students' motivation as well as their vocabulary development. One teaching technique that may support this objective is the Spelling Bee game, since it provides enjoyable and competitive learning activities that encourage students to practice vocabulary actively. This research was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of the Spelling Bee game in vocabulary instruction. The study applied a pre-experimental method, which is categorized as one of the most basic forms of experimental research. In this approach, a single group received a treatment and the outcomes were observed to determine whether meaningful changes occurred. The research used a one-group pre-test and post-test design. The participants were students from the Beginner A class at Ganesa English Course, selected through purposive sampling. Data were obtained from pre-test and post-test results and analyzed statistically using SPSS software. The statistical analysis from both the paired sample test and t-test showed similar findings. The results revealed a standard error mean of 2.305, a standard deviation of 10.310, and an average difference of -30.000 between pre-test and post-test scores. The maximum difference obtained was -32.174, while the minimum difference was -41.825. In addition, the t-test score reached -16.048 with a significance value of 0.000 at a degree of freedom (df) of 19. These findings indicate that students' vocabulary achievement improved significantly after being taught through the Spelling Bee game. Therefore, the study concludes that the Spelling Bee game is an effective method for enhancing vocabulary learning among beginner students at Ganesa English Course.*

Keywords : *Games; Teaching vocabulary, Spelling bee, Vocabulary.*

INTRODUCTION

Languages shape the world we live in and facilitate communication among friends, family, parents, teachers, spouses, rivals, and enemies. Language consists of a set of rules or symbols that allow people to express ideas, thoughts, and feelings while adapting to their surroundings. This ability to communicate is what defines language. While only humans can use and comprehend language, other organisms cannot be taught to speak (Yohana, 2023)

English is a universal language used by people across the globe. In Indonesia, where Bahasa Indonesia is the primary language, it is essential for children to learn other languages, particularly English. There are various ways to learn English, such as immersing oneself among native speakers, reading books, and listening to music. However, understanding vocabulary is equally important. Vocabulary is crucial in all languages and can be categorized into two types: active and passive. Passive vocabulary refers to words that people are able to recognize and understand but seldom use, whereas active vocabulary includes words that are commonly used in speaking, reading, and writing activities (Bagustian, 2023).

English is taught as a foreign language in Indonesia. Many pupils find learning English difficult since Bahasa Indonesia and English have distinct language standards. Despite these obstacles, children must increase their vocabulary in order to improve their linguistic abilities (Junaid et al., 2022). Learning a language requires having a large vocabulary, which may significantly enhance one's English reading and writing skills. By using engaging teaching strategies that facilitate the comprehension and retention of new words, educators play a critical role in assisting students in expanding their vocabulary (Hiebert & Kamil, 2005).

Both spoken and written words are included in vocabulary. Written vocabulary refers to language acquired by reading and writing, while oral vocabulary consists of words that are often heard or spoken (Arios, 2021). Understanding language in all its productive and receptive forms is the next step in language learning. Words that are recognized by sight or hearing are referred to as receptive vocabulary, whereas words that are often utilized in writing and speech are referred to as productive vocabulary. Children's ability to talk, listen, read, and write is influenced by their vocabulary, which is a fundamental aspect of language competence. A key component of the English language instruction curriculum is vocabulary. According to Rianyansa & Maisarah (2024), the first step in learning a foreign language is developing one's vocabulary. Since vocabulary is used in communication, it is one of the essential skills that must be acquired.

Additionally, (Neuman & Dwyer, 2009) defines vocabulary as the capacity to comprehend a word's meaning. Helping pupils make the connection between each term and its proper context or equivalent in their home tongue is the aim of vocabulary education. Learning vocabulary requires students to grasp word meanings so they can effectively use them in sentences. Ultimately, vocabulary knowledge fosters expressive language skills in both speaking and listening while also promoting effective communication.

Lack of vocabulary, difficulties in pronouncing and writing words correctly, and challenges in recalling their meanings are common issues faced by students. Often, teachers' explanations are interpreted differently by their students. It stands to reason that nothing can be effectively communicated without words. When learning a new language, vocabulary is essential, particularly if pupils want to speak it fluently (Qomariyah &

Nafisah, 2020) . However, teaching vocabulary is not an easy process. Pupils must not only know words, but also comprehend their meanings.

One issue with teaching vocabulary is that pupils may not comprehend the terms they are taught, even if they are practical in daily life. On the other hand, kids could comprehend the terms yet think they are superfluous. As a result, educators have to concentrate on teaching phrases that will benefit their pupils. According to (Richards, 2011) "Vocabulary is an essential part of learning a language, laying the groundwork for speaking, listening, reading, and writing." In order to assist pupils become more proficient in the language, experts advise using flexible and entertaining methods like games.

According to (Saiya et al., 2022), a game is an activity that attempts to produce a certain circumstance by using just the techniques permitted by particular rules and the range of techniques that restrict play. Games may be an alternate approach to language acquisition, claims (Kamali et al., 2022). Playing games is a great approach to acquire vocabulary, according to several experts in language teaching methods. Reviewing terms from earlier lessons, confirming vocabulary that students already know, and introducing new vocabulary as an icebreaker exercise at the beginning of class are all effective and engaging ways to teach vocabulary. In general, a game is a pleasant activity with rules that people engage in, either individually or in groups, to accomplish a purpose.

According to (Yusuf et al., 2017) argues that spelling can help students enhance their English vocabulary in the classroom. Learners must have a basic understanding of English terminology before advancing One substitute for teaching vocabulary is the Spelling Bee game. It's also a great technique for kids to become better at spelling. The Spelling Bee is a game that teaches kids how to spell and pronounce words(Maybin & Swann, 2009). Students may acquire whatever word they may be lacking by playing this game. The Spelling Bee game's ability to help kids recall how to spell words correctly is one of its main benefits. Spelling bees are competitive events that may be organized at many levels, from local schools to major championships. Participants must spell a word. This competition is intended to assist pupils in expanding their vocabulary and shows their proficiency with words. and, consequently, their confidence in speaking English (Pusparini & Ningrum, 2020).

Spelling bees are fun and may make children feel more confident. Spoken language proficiency, which is based on written form, is a highly helpful communication ability. While three percent of English words are predictable, seventy percent are relatively easy to spell. The Spelling Bee offers an engaging way to address spelling challenges, even those involving difficult words. This method actively involves students in learning, fostering creativity and a proactive learning mindset. The goal is to engage children in studying, and using the Spelling Bee makes learning enjoyable, inspiring students to love the language. According to (Yohana, 2023), utilizing games as a teaching tool effectively transforms students into happy and content learners. For instance, children may practice

vocabulary activities like dictation, filling in gaps, and properly arranging letters while remembering their spellings by playing the Spelling Game.

There are still certain holes that need to be filled even though a number of earlier studies have explored the role of games, especially the Spelling Bee game, in enhancing students' vocabulary learning. Most previous studies mainly focused on students' motivation, confidence, or general vocabulary improvement without providing detailed statistical evidence regarding the effectiveness of the method through pre-test and post-test analysis. In addition, many earlier studies were conducted in formal school settings, while limited research has explored the implementation of the Spelling Bee game in non-formal educational institutions such as English courses, especially for beginner-level learners. Additionally, prior studies have not adequately investigated how the Spelling Bee game might directly assist kids in overcoming challenges related to spelling, pronunciation, memory, and vocabulary retention at the same time. In order to close these gaps, this research uses a quantitative pre-experimental design backed by statistical analysis using SPSS to examine how well the Spelling Bee game improves vocabulary acquisition among beginning students at Ganesa English Course.

METHOD

A study approach known as "pre-experimental design" involves giving a set of pupils both a pre-test and a post-test to evaluate their progress. While the post-test assesses the students' comprehension after their participation in a spelling bee intervention, the pre-test attempts to gauge the students' basic vocabulary knowledge in English.

Table 1. Recommended length of each section in the manuscript

No	Participants	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
1.	Beginner A Class Students	Vocabulary Test	Teaching vocabulary through spelling bee game	Vocabulary test

One-group pre-test and post-test designs were used in this study's pre-experimental design. Prior to the therapy, a pre-test was administered to the children to gauge their level of beginning vocabulary acquisition. The Spelling Bee game was then used to carry out the therapy. In order to assess the impact of the therapy on the students' vocabulary performance, a post-test was administered to them.

Before giving students information and explanations about the Spelling Bee game, the researcher gave them a pre-test to assist them understand the language connected to the knowledge they had previously learned. A post-test was administered after the intervention to assess the therapy's efficacy by looking at whether students' vocabulary grew and if their post-test scores were higher than those of the pre-test. Both the pre- and post-tests take an average of sixty minutes.

For this study, purposive sampling selection was employed to choose a sample from the Beginner class, specifically eighth grade A, at the Ganesa English course. The primary tool used in this research is the test. Testing is a systematic method to evaluate or assess something within a specific context, carried out according to established standards, as stated by (Rahmawati & Harahap, 2023) In this study, a multiple-choice test with 25 questions and four alternative responses was used.

The data for the analysis were computed using the results from the tests taken by the students before and after the intervention. To ascertain if there had been an improvement, the researcher used SPSS's t-test. This test is essential for determining how the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y) relate to one another. The outcome of this test determines whether the hypothesis is accepted or rejected. According to the first hypothesis, H₀, spelling bees do not considerably increase kids' vocabularies. According to the second hypothesis, spelling bees do significantly improve kids' vocabulary. The independent variable (X) has a substantial impact on the dependent variable (Y) if the significance value is less than 0.05 or if the t-count is higher than the t-table value. On the other hand, it indicates that variable X has no appreciable effect on variable Y if the significance value is higher than 0.05 or the t-count is lower than the t-table value. The distributed t-table may be consulted when the t-count results are acquired.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research was conducted at Ganesa English Course on Monday, November 10th, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. WIB. In the first meeting, the researcher administered a pre-test to measure the students' initial vocabulary mastery before the treatment was given. The researcher then used the Spelling Bee game as an educational tool for vocabulary development on November 12th, 2025. On Monday, November 17, 2025, a post-test was administered to assess the pupils' vocabulary growth after the completion of the program. The post-test findings showed that the Beginner class students at Ganesa English Course had effectively increased their vocabulary understanding via the usage of the Spelling Bee game.

1. Paired Sample correlation

The correlation between the post-test and pre-test is known as paired sample correlation. SPSS was used by the researchers. This analysis's outcome is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Paired Sample Statistics

Score Pretest and Post-test	N	Mean Before treatment	Mean After Treatment
	20	18.5000	55.5000

Students' pre-test scores of 18,000 and post-test scores of 55,000 show a substantial rise after therapy, according to the SPSS data paired samples statistics.

Table 3. Paired Sample Correlations

Before Treatment and After Treatment	N	Correlation	Sig.
	20	-.036	.880

According to the SPSS data paired samples correlations, the two variables' correlations were -.036 with a sig. of 0,880. This indicates a strong and significant correlation between the two mean pretests because < (less than) 0,05.

2. Paired Sample T-test

The paired sample T-test is used to compare two paired samples of the same patient who receive different treatments. The paired sample T-test was tested by researchers using SPSS. To determine if the means of the two paired samples varied, the paired sample T-test was used. The results of the analysis are shown in the table 4.

Table 4. Paired Sample Test

Pair 1	Before treatment-after treatment	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	The difference's 95% confidence interval is lower.
		-37.00000	10.31095	2.30560	-41.82568

Pair 1	Before treatment-after treatment	95% confidence Interval of the Difference Upper	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		-37.00000	10.31095	2.30560	-41.82568

The results of the paired sample test and the analytical comparisons using the t-test are shown in the table above. The results include the average before and after the test (-30,000), the standard deviation (10,310), the mean, and the standard error (2,305). At the top and bottom, the disparity is -32,174 and -41.825, respectively. The t-test result is (-16,048) with a significance level of 0.000 and a df of 19. Finally, spelling bee activities are a good way to teach the Beginner class of the Ganesha English course. The value of the sig. (2-tailed)s column is 0.00, according to the significance of the data in the previous table. If the significance value (2-tailed) is less than 0.05, the Ho is rejected and the Ha is accepted; if the significance value (2-tailed) is more than 0.05, the Ho is accepted and the Ha is rejected. Furthermore, the data shows that Ho is rejected while Ha is accepted, indicating that Spelling Bee Games enhanced students' vocabularies..

Discussion

The results of this research, which demonstrate the substantial influence of spelling bee activities on pupils' vocabulary growth. Engaging in spelling bee games not only enhances children's spelling abilities but also enriches their vocabulary and overall educational experience. These games compel children to actively engage with language by requiring them to remember, repeat, spell, and comprehend words simultaneously, ultimately fostering an expansion of their vocabulary.

In a similar vein, (Rahmawati & Harahap, 2023) study found that using the spelling bee game as a vocabulary teaching method was well received.. This suggests that the spelling bee may represent an innovative approach to vocabulary acquisition. As children participate in these captivating games, they have the opportunity to broaden their vocabulary and discover new terms in an enjoyable context.

By integrating these previous findings with the current study's outcomes, one can reasonably conclude that spelling bee games considerably assist children in mastering not only the spelling of words but also their correct pronunciation. The interactive nature of these games appears to spark increased interest and motivation among students in their efforts to learn English vocabulary. The goal of using games in the classroom is to make the introduction of new vocabulary fun for students by creating a stimulating atmosphere full of interesting obstacles.

Alongside memorizing words, students are also tasked with spelling and pronouncing them accurately. Through this process, they gain an understanding of word classes and how to effectively employ definitions within complete sentences. According to the study's findings, most students expressed positive feelings toward the spelling bee game, indicating its successful integration into classroom learning. The implementation of the spelling bee at Ganesha English Course serves as a testimony to its effectiveness in vocabulary instruction.

Competitiveness is an essential element of the game, as players strive to meet specific objectives. This competitive atmosphere can energize the entire class, creating an environment brimming with enthusiasm. Inquiry and experimentation emerge as powerful learning strategies, fostering motivation within a supportive and friendly atmosphere while simultaneously establishing clear and attainable goals. As students wait for their turns, the engaging nature of the game maintains their interest. Participants actively take turns crafting words and articulating sentences in the whispers spelling game, ensuring that every student is involved.

Each game is designed to incorporate a level of competition, participation, teamwork, and collaborative learning, all of which are vital for maintaining motivation and ultimately enhancing learning efficiency. However, researchers caution against relying solely on games as a teaching method. They emphasize that, while games can be beneficial, they should be viewed as a complementary tool rather than a replacement for other instructional methods, ensuring a well-rounded educational approach.

CONCLUSION

The results of this research show that the Spelling Bee game helps students in the Beginner class at Ganesa English Course improve their vocabulary knowledge. The pupils' post-test results, which were substantially higher than their pre-test results, demonstrate the improvement. There was a significant difference before and after the therapy, according to the statistical analysis utilizing the paired sample t-test, with a significance value of 0.000 and a t-test result of -16.048. Consequently, using the Spelling Bee game to teach vocabulary to kids at the beginning level may be seen as an efficient and entertaining method. Furthermore, future researchers interested in investigating game-based learning strategies in English vocabulary training may find this work useful as a reference.

Spelling games have been shown to enhance children's receptive vocabulary, and teachers are encouraged to incorporate them in the classroom. English instructors must set clear rules and expectations to maximize effectiveness. To minimize spelling errors, teachers should focus more on students' writing and speaking. If instructors do not point out errors, students may continue to spell or pronounce words incorrectly. However, more effort is needed to make spelling games more engaging and tailored to different skill levels.

Researchers may use this work to help students learn and master new vocabulary in the future. This study can serve as a reference for further research and assist students in expanding their vocabulary. It will also contribute to the improvement of future studies and provide additional resources for exploration.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arios, E. (2021). Peningkatan penguasaan kosakata melalui model pembelajaran scramble pada siswa kelas v sd negeri 040551 lau pakam tahun pelajaran 2019/2020. *Bahastra: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.30743/bahastra.v5i2.3669>
- Bagustian, R. A. (2023). The Effectiveness of Spelling Bee game in teaching vocabulary. *Repository.Uinjkt.Ac.Id*, 1–101.
- Hiebert, E. H., & Kamil, M. L. (2005). Teaching and learning vocabulary: Bringing research to practice. In *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary: Bringing Research to Practice*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410612922>
- Junaid, R., Paldy, & Hasan, A. (2022). The Use of Fly Swatter Game to Improve Students' Vocabulary Mastery. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 4(3). <https://doi.org/10.32996/jeltal.2022.4.3.11>
- Kamali, W., Aliwutun, A., & Duyo, R. R. (2022). The use of spelling bee game in teaching vocabulary at the eight grade students of smp yp PGRI 4 Makassar. *Journal English Education*, 2(3).

- Maybin, J., & Swann, J. (2009). The routledge companion to english language Studies. In *The Routledge Companion to English Language Studies*.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203878958>
- Neuman, S. B., & Dwyer, J. (2009). Missing in action: vocabulary instruction in pre-K. *The Reading Teacher*, 62(5). <https://doi.org/10.1598/rt.62.5.2>
- Pusparini, I., & Ningrum, M. P. (2020). Improving students' vocabulary mastery using spelling bee game at fifth grade in sdit ya bunayya pujon. *Journey (Journal of English Language and Pedagogy)*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.33503/journey.v3i2.956>
- Qomariyah, S. S., & Nafisah, B. Z. (2020). Spelling bee game in students' vocabulary achievement. *Jo-ELT (Journal of English Language Teaching) Fakultas Pendidikan Bahasa & Seni Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris IKIP*, 7(2).
<https://doi.org/10.33394/jo-elt.v7i2.3200>
- Rahmawati, W. T., & Harahap, Y. M. (2023). Spelling bee games to increase students' vocabulary mastery at the islamic-affiliated middle schools: an action research. *Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 11(1).
<https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v11i1.6758>
- Richards, J. C. (2011). Theories of Teaching in Language Teaching. In *Methodology in Language Teaching*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511667190.004>
- Saiya, T. M., Oroh, E. Z., & Sanger, M. (2022). Enriching Students' Vocabulary Through Spelling Bee Game. *SoCul:International Journal of Research in Social Cultural Issues*, 2(4).
- Yohana, S. (2023). The acquisition of english vocabularies by five years old student through spelling bee game at dd2 education centre. *Universitas Muslim Nusantara Al Washliyah English Education Journal (UMNEEJ)*, 1(1).
- Yusuf, Y. Q., Mustafa, F., & Alqinda, M. (2017, September). The use of spelling bee game in teaching vocabulary to junior high school students. In *Proceedings of The 1st National Conference on Teachers Professional Development*.